

UNCLASSIFIED - T147

Mr. Ron Kidd

Dear Mr. Kidd:

I am writing in response to your letter of November 4, 2015, addressed to the Honourable Dr. Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs.

In your letter, you requested information about the fulfillment of Catholic financial obligations under the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, including whether these obligations were the subject of litigation between the Government of Canada and the Corporation of Catholic Entities Party to the Indian Residential Schools Settlement (the Corporation).

I can confirm that, in December 2013, the Government of Canada filed a Request for Direction with the Court of Queen's Bench for Saskatchewan with respect to matters related to the Corporation's financial obligations under the Settlement Agreement. In particular, Canada asserted that the Corporation was not entitled to claim legal fees as reasonable administrative costs and sought \$1.6 million to be reimbursed to the Aboriginal Healing Foundation.

Although Canada and the Corporation originally entered into negotiations to resolve this matter, in the end, court direction was required on various aspects of the Corporation's financial obligations under the Settlement Agreement. On July 16, 2015, the Court determined that Canada and the Corporation had reached a binding agreement, such that, in exchange for reimbursement of \$1.2 million of claimed administrative costs, Canada would release the Corporation from its financial obligations under the Settlement Agreement. Accordingly, the Corporation has until January 15, 2016, to issue a payment of \$1.2 million to the Legacy of Hope Foundation, the successor entity to the Aboriginal Healing Foundation.

You have also requested information about one specific component of the Catholic Entities' financial obligations under the Settlement Agreement, which is the Entities' commitment to undertake a seven year, Canada-wide fundraising campaign. The Settlement Agreement stipulated that the Catholic Entities had to make "best efforts" to reach \$25 million. The seven-year period for this campaign concluded October 19, 2014. The Government of Canada has recently requested a report from the Corporation on its fundraising activities, but has not yet received a response.

I realize that a referral may not be ideal given past correspondence, but on this aspect, the Corporation does remain your best source of information. I invite you to contact the Corporation directly if you have any further questions about its fundraising campaign and other activities they have undertaken or might contemplate. The Corporation can be contacted via

The Most Reverend Gérard Pettipas,
Archbishop and Chair of the Board of Directors,
Corporation of Catholic Entities Party to the
Residential Schools Settlement
109 Wright Street
GATINEAU, QC J8X 2G7

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your interest in this important work. I can assure you that the Government of Canada is committed to a fair and lasting resolution to the legacy of Indian Residential Schools and recognizes that bringing closure to the legacy lies at the heart of reconciliation and a renewal of the relationships between Indigenous people who attended these schools, their families and communities, and all Canadians.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Saranchuk
Assistant Deputy Minister
Resolution and Individual Affairs Sector
Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada

c.c.: The Hon. Dr. Hedy Fry, MP PC
c.c.: The Most Reverend Gérard Pettipas

s.16(2)(c)

s.19(1)

RON KIDD

E-mail: [REDACTED]

November 4, 2015

Hon. Carolyn Bennett
Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs
House of Commons
Ottawa Ontario
K1A 0A6

REFER TO
220656
257552

Dear Minister Bennett:

Re. Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement & the Roman Catholic Entities

I would like to welcome you into your new position at [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

The Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement ("the Agreement") gives you sole responsibility for obtaining the amounts owed by various Roman Catholic entities for healing and other services for the aboriginal victims of its schools. Your Conservative predecessors did not answer my questions about whether or not the Roman Catholic entities had actually fulfilled their obligations.

Although I have had the support of the Hon. Dr. Hedy Fry MP, PC since 2007, your Conservative predecessors were always deceptive to her and stonewalled her. Instead of answering her questions in 2007 they referred her to the lawyer representing the Roman Catholic entities without telling her who he was. He did not answer her questions, as your predecessors could have predicted. Her time, effort and support was wasted with no result. She became irrelevant.

Instead of responding to the Hon. Hedy Fry, in 2014 your predecessors partially answered her enquiries via a public relations release to the Globe and Mail. I believe it is obvious that your predecessors were deceptive to the Hon. Hedy Fry and me because when she first made her enquiries seven years earlier the Roman Catholic entities had not met their obligations. They did not want her to be able to review the adequacy of your Ministry's response, which at the time did not include legal action.

Your predecessors' deception and stonewalling prevented the Hon. Hedy Fry from conducting legitimate Opposition activities in a functioning democracy.

Page 1 of 2
04/11/2015: 8:03:43 AM
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T147

Ron Kidd

Page 2 of 2

I believe that if I had not persuaded the Globe and Mail to contact your office there never would have been a public disclosure of the failures of the Roman Catholic entities to pay the amounts they owe for healing services for their victims. Therefore, there never would have been public disclosure of the failures of your predecessors to obtain these amounts.

I am concerned that the previous government's announcement to the Globe and Mail may have been just a public relations exercise designed to control publicity of its failures.

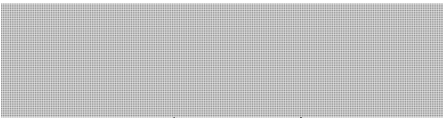
In addition to the failures outlined in the Globe and Mail article, the Agreement obliges the various Roman Catholic entities to raise \$25 million from fundraising activities to help its aboriginal victims. The Church decided not to do this at the parish level and only obtained about \$1 million.

Please tell me if your Ministry started the legal action, if it includes the failure of the various Roman Catholic entities to fundraise, and what the outcome was. Do you consider the failure of the Roman Catholic Church to fundraise at the parish level a voluntary breach of the Agreement?

Although I am asking these questions because they are important to me, I also believe that holding your staff accountable for providing direct and honest answers to Members of Parliament will reacquaint them with democratic processes.

I spoke to the Hon. Hedy Fry about the concerns raised in this letter at a volunteer recognition event on November 1, 2015. Please copy her on your reply directly.

Yours respectfully and sincerely,


Ronald Kidd

Copy:

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Page 2 of 204/11/2015; 8:03:43 AM
